



MERSHON CENTER for International Security Studies

Office of International Affairs

[ABOUT US](#)
[RESEARCH](#)
[NEWS](#)
[EVENTS](#)
[GRANTS](#)
[PEOPLE](#)
[PUBLICATIONS](#)
[CONTACT](#)

You are here: [Home](#) ▶ [Events](#)

EVENTS & DEADLINES

- Jan 07** **Mustapha Nabli**
 01/07/2014, -
 Special Event
- Jan 09** **Adam Cathcart**
 01/09/2014, -
 Institute for Korean Studies
 Event; Co-sponsored by the
 Mershon Center and the
 Institute for Chinese Studies
- Jan 13** **John Mueller**
 01/13/2014, -
 Director's Speaker Series
- Jan 16** **Richard Immerman**
 01/16/2014, -
 Diplomatic History Series

ARCHIVED EVENTS

Academic Year

Month

SEARCH

EVENTS CALENDAR

Climate, Security, Health & Resilience Series

NORMAN MACLEOD

"The Causes of Extinction: Setting the Modern Biodiversity Crisis in Context"

Tuesday, October 08, 2013, 12:30PM - 2:00PM
 Mershon Center for International Security Studies
 1501 Neil Ave.
 Columbus, OH 43201

[Click here to view the event in Windows Media Player.](#)

[Click here to view the event in RealPlayer.](#)

[Download podcast on Mershon subscription page.](#)

Norman MacLeod is dean of post-graduate education and training at the Natural History Museum in London. He received his doctorate in micropaleontology from University of Texas at Dallas in 1986, his master's in paleontology from Southern Methodist University in 1978, and his bachelor's in geology from University of Missouri in 1975. Through his research, he has made significant contributions to new morphometric data-analysis methods, the punctuated-equilibrium controversy, as well as the Cretaceous-Tertiary extinction controversy. MacLeod is a frequent contributor to the technical paleontological literature, book reviewer, symposium organizer, and keynote speaker.

MacLeod is the author of *The Great Extinctions: What Causes them and How They Shape Life* (NHN Press, 2013) and *Atlas of Deep-Sea Benthic Foraminifera* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, with A. Holbourn and A. Henderson). He is current writing a book on *The Quantitative Analysis of Morphology* (forthcoming, 2014). MacLeod is also the creator and executive editor of the PaleoBase series of electronic paleontological databases (Wiley/Blackwell 2001-present, (<http://www.paleobase.com>), the creator and manager of the PaleoNet paleontological

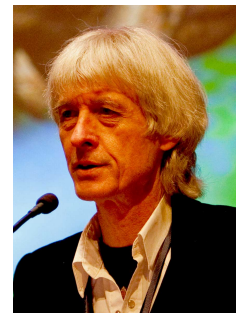
communications system (http://www.nhm.ac.uk/hosted_sites/paleonet) the co-founder and (to 2003) executive editor of the first fully electronic paleontological journal, *Palaeontologia Electronica* (<http://paleo-electronica.org>).

In addition, MacLeod was elected a fellow of the Geological Society of London in 2002. In 2003, he was elected a fellow of the Linnean Society of London. In 2005, he was awarded an honorary professorship at University College, London which was renewed in 2010. In 2011, he was awarded an honorary professorship at the Nanjing Institute of Geology and Paleontology, Chinese Academy of Sciences. MacLeod has also appeared many times on television and radio programs, and in newspaper/magazine interviews discussing a wide variety of paleontological, biological, evolutionary, and history of science topics.

Abstract

This talk will delve into the basis of the linkage between the causes of ancient extinctions in the context of the modern biodiversity crisis. With its decidedly biblical overtones, the phenomenon of extinction has intrigued and puzzled religious leaders, philosophers, and scientists for (literally) millennia. Fossils make clear that the Earth had, in its ancient past, been inhabited by a vast succession of unique creatures — many with bizarre morphologies whose purpose defies explanation even today. The modern biota is estimated to represent less than one percent of the species that have ever lived, an observation that led one prominent paleontologist to quip "to a first approximation all life on Earth is extinct."

Certainly extinctions have happened in historical times. but the headlines. radio broadcasts. and television program tell us that



Norman MacLeod
 Dean of Post-Graduate
 Education and Training

Natural History Museum
 University College
 London

certainly, extinctions have happened in historical times, but the frequency, scale, and extent of the extinctions are such that we are under serious threat of one more, although the numbers of organisms known to have become extinct over the last 400 years represents a vanishingly small proportion of the number involved in other great extinctions of the geological past. Interestingly, climate change is now invoked routinely as the common proximal cause of species extinctions throughout the planet's geological past.

If the capacity of humans to effect the environment has reached the intensity level of a major natural process, and this capacity cannot be curtailed over a reasonable time frame, it is disturbing to note that the state of the environment at present is, in many ways, similar to its state just prior to the end-Permian extinction event, which was the largest extinction event in the whole of Earth history and the last time sea level stood as low as it does today.

[Back](#)

JEvents v2.2.3 Copyright © 2006-2012

MERSHON CENTER

[About Us](#)
[Research](#)
[News](#)
[Events](#)
[Grants](#)
[People](#)
[Publications](#)
[Contact](#)

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

[Office of International Affairs](#)
[Global Gateways](#)
[International Students](#)
[International Scholars](#)
[Study Abroad](#)
[Grants and Scholarships](#)
[International Agreements](#)

AREA STUDY CENTERS

[Center for African Studies](#)
[Center for Latin American Studies](#)
[Center for Slavic & East European Studies](#)
[Polish Studies Initiative](#)
[East Asian Studies Center](#)
[Institute for Chinese Studies](#)
[Institute for Japanese Studies](#)
[Institute for Korean Studies](#)
[Middle East Studies Center](#)

RESOURCES

[Current Events](#)
[Print Newsletter](#)
[Annual Report](#)
[Photo Album](#)
[Events Archive](#)
[Knowledge Bank](#)



© 2013 Mershon Center for International Security Studies – Office of International Affairs

1501 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

Phone: 614-292-1681 | Fax: 614-292-2407

[Request an alternate format of this page.](#)



[^ back to top](#)